

ad been inserted on the a standard rifle sling, rap or a sling from a use of a rifle sling is to pping the arm into the the rifle was too short d to provide some addi-

er Mannlicher-Carcano ntification was initially reference works and by liber was independently cano 6.5 millimeter car- fur cast of the inside of a micrometer.¹⁶ (The rior of the barrel, meas- f American weapons is n has a barrel which is inch in diameter. The measured in millimeters. ls to an American .257- bout one-fourth inch.)¹⁶ a communication from nce Service. This com- e rifle, as follows: "CAL- ALY" refers to its origin, erican importer prior to was manufactured and ly; the number "C2766" is a question is the only one umerals "1940" and "40" her figures, numbers, and er's, or manufacturer's

series of Italian military itter von Mannlicher and l of 6.5-millimeter caliber hortly before World War World War II, however, d an ammunition supply es as 6.5-millimeter caliber /38.¹⁸ The 91/38 has been itary equipment, has been common in this country.¹⁹ 91/38 is operated by turn- the rear, pushing the bolt and pulling the trigger. own the bolt handle com- in, and locks the bolt into

place. When the trigger is pulled, the cocked spring drives the firing pin forward and the cartridge is fired. The face of the bolt bears a lip, called the extractor, around a portion of its circumference. As the bolt is pushed forward, this lip grasps the rim of the cartridge. As the bolt is pulled back, the extractor brings the empty cartridge case with it, and as the cartridge case is being brought back, it strikes a projection in the ejection port called the ejector, which throws it out of the rifle. Meanwhile, a leaf spring beneath the clip has raised the next cartridge into loading position. When the bolt is brought forward, it pushes the fresh cartridge into the chamber. The trigger is pulled, the cartridge is fired, the bolt handle is brought up, the bolt is brought back, and the entire cycle starts again. As long as there is ammunition in the clip, one need only work the bolt and pull the trigger to fire the rifle.²⁰

The clip itself is inserted into the rifle by drawing back the bolt, and pushing the clip in from the top. The clip holds one to six cartridges.²¹ If six cartridges are inserted into the clip and an additional cartridge is inserted into the chamber, up to seven bullets can be fired before reloading.²² When the rifle was found in the Texas School Book Depository Building it contained a clip²³ which bore the letters "SMI" (the manufacturer's markings) and the number "952" (possibly a part number or the manufacturer's code number).²⁴ The rifle probably was sold without a clip; however, the clip is commonly available.²⁵

Rifle Cartridge and Cartridge Cases

When the rifle was found, one cartridge was in the chamber.²⁶ The cartridge was a 6.5-millimeter Mannlicher-Carcano cartridge, manufactured by the Western Cartridge Co., at East Alton, Ill. This type of cartridge is loaded with a full metal-jacketed, military type of bullet, weighing 160-161 grains. The bullet has parallel sides and a round nose. It is just under 1.2 inches long, and just over one-fourth inch in diameter.²⁷ Its velocity is approximately 2,165 feet per second.²⁸ The cartridge is very dependable; in tests runs by the FBI and the Infantry Weapons Evaluation Branch of the U.S. Army, the C2766 rifle was fired with this Western Cartridge Co. ammunition over 100 times, with no misfires. (In contrast, some of the other ammunition available on the market for this rifle is undesirable or of very poor quality).²⁹ The cartridge is readily available for purchase from mail-order houses, as well as a few gunshops; some 2 million rounds have been placed on sale in the United States.³⁰

The presence of the cartridge in the chamber did not necessarily mean that the assassin considered firing another bullet, since he may have reloaded merely by reflex.³¹

Apart from the cartridge in the rifle, three expended cartridge cases were found in the southeast portion of the sixth floor of the Texas School Book Depository Building, lying between the south